



Ola Lokahi

Creating a Healthy Hawaii Together

APRIL
2018

The mission of the Department of Health is to protect and improve the health and environment for all people in Hawaii. We believe that an optimal state of physical, mental, social and environmental well-being is a right and responsibility of all of Hawaii's people.

Recycle in Celebration of Earth Day April 22!

As Earth Day 2018 nears, it's a good time to reflect on recycling, particularly beverage and plastic water bottle containers which are responsible for pollution and negative effects on the environment and public health.

Every year, more than 900 million beverage containers are sold in Hawaii—which equates to roughly 650 containers for each person in the state. Fortunately, 7 out of every 10 containers in Hawaii are recycled in part because of the Department of Health's Deposit Beverage Container (DBC) program, also known as HI-5. The program was launched in January 2005 to significantly reduce litter and conserve resources. From the program's inception through December 2017, more than 8.5 billion containers have been recycled instead of ending up in landfills or polluting the environment.

Companies that manufacture, import and engage in the sale of filled deposit beverage containers in the State of Hawaii are required to pay the department a deposit fee of 5 cents and a container fee of either 1 cent or 1.5 cents for each container. The DBC program certifies independent recycling companies to operate Certified Redemption Centers statewide where residents can drop off recyclable aluminum cans and glass and plastic bottles. These redemption centers provide refunds of the 5 cent deposit fee that is paid for eligible containers.

"The DBC program's success is a result of the commitment by Hawaii residents and visitors to

collect and redeem eligible containers," said **Michael Casey**, a planner with the DOH Office of Waste Management. "A 71 percent redemption rate is remarkable, given that there are so many different types of beverages sold in disposable containers available today and the fact that we often consume these beverages on the run or away from home."

Many public and private schools and community groups across the state have capitalized on the HI-5 program by organizing recycling drives to raise funds for school-related activities, athletic teams, student councils or for charitable organizations.

The DBC program is not without its challenges, which include constantly reminding the public of the importance of recycling.

"During the last few years, the redemption rate has been on the decline, so our biggest challenges involve encouraging people to redeem more DBCs and making the redemption process more convenient," Michael said. "In the coming months, the department will begin conducting broad public surveys of shoppers and redemption center customers to learn more about public behaviors, knowledge and attitudes so that we can continue to improve the program."

In the meantime, DOH continues to encourage everyone to recycle their beverage containers. It's good for the environment and for the 'aina!

To find the redemption center nearest you, go online to: <http://health.hawaii.gov/hi5/redemption-centers/>. More details on the deposit program and beverage containers are available at: <http://health.hawaii.gov/hi5/>.



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Walk @ Work Wednesdays at Kinau Hale

DOH's new walking group is continuing its weekly lunch hour walks. The group held its first Walk @ Work Wednesday on April 4 and toured the Kaka'ako area, including the graffiti art and SALT dining districts and the new mixed use residential district. The group will continue to meet every Wednesday at noon at the back parking lot of Kinau Hale for a brisk 30 minute walk along select routes in the Downtown area. The first 20 participants who complete three sessions will receive a pedometer, compliments of the Kaiser health plan. Check with your doctor prior to joining to see if you have a physical or medical condition that would prevent you from continuous walking for at least 30 minutes.



DOH employees ready for another brisk lunch hour walk.

Don't miss the Kinau Hale Worksite Wellness Committee's next Brown Bag Lunch and Learn interactive workshop is Thursday, April 24 from 12 noon to 1 pm in the first floor board meeting room. This month's topic—"Take a Look at Stress"—will discuss sources of stress, simple breathing techniques to relieve stress and the role of laughter and music in stress management. Registration is not required and participation is voluntary.

Brown Bag Lunch and Learn

STRESS

In this interactive workshop, you'll learn:

- Sources of stress.
- Simple breathing techniques to relieve stress symptoms.
- The role of laughter and music in stress management.

When: Tuesday April 24, 2018 12:00-1:00 PM
Where: Kinau Hale First Floor Boardroom
To register: Registration is NOT required. Participation is optional.

START
Living
HEALTHY
@WORK

hmsa

Hawaii's Health Care System

Hosted by the Kinau Hale Worksite Wellness Committee

Pham Among 'Top 40 Under 40' Leaders in Minority Health

Thaddeus Pham, viral hepatitis prevention coordinator with the DOH Harm Reduction Services Branch, was named among the top 2018 "40 Under 40 Leaders in Minority Health" by the National Minority Quality Forum. The award recognizes influential young minority leaders across the nation who are making a difference in health care.

Pham is co-founder and co-director of the Hep Free Hawaii Coalition, a community-based program focused on increasing awareness and access to hepatitis services in Hawaii. He received the prestigious award April 17 in Washington, DC during a leadership summit.



Thaddeus Pham

"It is an honor to receive this award on behalf of the many underserved communities that we fight for," Pham said. "More people are realizing how health care intersects with social issues such as racial inequality and minority status. Meaningful changes in public health care will require innovative thinking that looks beyond the medical aspects."

Pham's efforts to prevent the spread of viral hepatitis has brought him into contact

with larger health and social justice issues, including opioid overdose prevention, drug policy, immigrant and migrant healthcare, correctional health, homelessness, poverty, and sexual and gender equity.

Director Dr. Virginia Pressler is proud of Pham and considers him as a role model for the next generation of leaders in minority health.

"Emerging young leaders like Thaddeus will help fulfill the dream of eliminating health disparities in a generation," she said. "Fresh ideas and new approaches are needed to decrease health inequalities for minority communities and improve access to quality health care."

AIR QUALITY AWARENESS WEEK IS APRIL 30-MAY 4

The DOH Clean Air Branch reminds us that air quality affects everyone's health and the responsibility of improving air quality for future generations to enjoy extends to all of us.

This year's Air Quality Awareness Week theme is "Air Quality Where You Are." The goal of the week-long campaign is to raise public awareness about the crucial role that air quality has on overall health and to inspire people to take steps to reduce air pollution.

"Breathing clean air is something most of us take for granted but if you suffer from

asthma or other respiratory illnesses, poor air quality is something that can't be ignored," said Clean Air Branch Manager Marianne Rossio.

The Clean Air Branch regulates Hawaii's air pollution sources and in conjunction with the State Laboratories Division maintains Hawaii's statewide ambient air monitoring network with 13 air monitoring stations located throughout the Hawaiian Islands.

Marianne said big strides have been made in improving Hawaii's air quality over the last 40 years under the Federal Clean Air Act and Hawaii's air pollution control laws, resulting in some of the best air quality in the nation. However, Hawaii still faces many challenges, including fossil fuel pollution, vog and climate change. Fortunately, it's never too late to take action to improve air quality.

Suggestions to help reduce air pollution include:

- Making healthier transportation choices such as biking, walking, carpooling, taking the bus, avoiding excessive idling of your automobile and maintaining your vehicle.
- Decreasing energy usage by turning off lights when not in use, using energy efficient lighting and appliances, opening windows instead of using an air conditioner, line drying clothes;
- Reducing, reusing and recycling.

New Tuberculosis (TB) Screening Procedures Take Effect

Gov. David Ige recently approved a change in the Hawaii Administrative Rules covering tuberculosis (TB) clearance requirements for students and many employees across the state. The change took effect on March 17 and improves the state's TB screening process.

"We're excited about the updated procedures but implementation required a number of changes from computer data systems to forms, as well as a massive effort to educate our state partners," said **Dr. Elizabeth MacNeill**, chief of the DOH Tuberculosis Control Branch.

The rule change impacts more than just TB Control Branch employees. The DOH Public Health Nursing Branch (PHNB) actually serves two-thirds of

those who need TB clearance, or approximately 35,000 individuals a year. Numerous PHNB staff were involved in the nearly year-long planning process and more than 130 of them were closely involved in training and implementation.

Dr. MacNeill thanked a number of DOH staff offices, including the secretarial teams at Communicable Disease and Public Health Nursing Divisions who worked on numerous drafts of the rule; staff at the Office of Planning, Policy and Program Development who facilitated the public hearing and routing process; Dr. Sarah Park and her staff at the Disease Outbreak Control Division for helping with the physician alert; the Communications Office; and the Office

of Health Care Assurance.

"I also want to thank our partners at other state agencies including the Department of Education, University of Hawaii, and the Office of the Attorney General," she said. "It required a team effort and I'm grateful as well as humbled by the hard work of everyone involved and to department's leadership for their support and guidance.

"I'm also thankful and very proud of the TB Control Branch team for their hard work, expert assistance and patience."



National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Set For April 28

As the nation struggles with an opioid epidemic, efforts to round up unwanted and unused prescription drugs are more important than ever. Sponsored by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is an ideal venue for the public to dispose of unwanted prescription drugs in a safe and responsible way—no questions asked. It's also an opportunity to raise awareness about the potential for opioid abuse and to prevent overdose deaths.

"The Department of the Attorney General is happy to participate in the National Take Back Initiative with the Drug Enforcement Administration and State Narcotics Enforcement Division on **Saturday, April 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at

various locations on Oahu, Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii," said Dana Viola,

First Deputy Attorney General.

Unused prescription drugs may also harm the environment if discarded improperly. Flushing drugs down toilets, for example, can contaminate waterways and endanger wildlife.

Prescription drugs pose an even more immediate danger to people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), prescription opioids and heroin killed more than 33,000 people across the U.S. in 2015. Nearly half of all opioid overdose deaths involve a prescription. A 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed that a majority of abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet.

DOH unveiled the Hawaii Opioid Initiative action plan in December 2017. The plan serves as a statewide road map for prevention and treatment of opioid and other substance misuse issues. Portions of the plan have already been

implemented, including focus areas in treatment access, prescriber education, data informed decision making, prevention and public education, pharmacy-based interventions and support of law enforcement and first responders.

Drug Take Back Day collection sites on Oahu will be at the Hawaii State Capitol; Kahala Mall near the Kilauea Avenue entrance; Marine Corps Exchange; Pearl City Police Station; Pearl Harbor Navy Exchange; Schofield Barracks Army and Air Force Post Exchange; Town Center of Mililani; and Windward Mall near the food court. There is no cost and drop-offs can be made anonymously.

The last National Take Back Day event in October 2017 netted a record 456 tons of prescription drugs at over 5,321 collection sites nationwide.

For additional information and/or locations of collection sites, go online to dea.gov or ag.hawaii.gov or call (808) 541-1930.

GotDrugs?

